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## Trends in the Development of Biofunctional Saccharides in Japan

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Now in Japan, healthy foodstuffs have been strongly requested, and several kinds of saccharides were developed for the purpose of cholesterol reduction, stool regulation, belly conditioning, protection from caries, bifidus factor etc. Polysaccharides, reserve saccharides such as starch, structural polysaccharides such as cellulose, hemicellulose and chitin show some biofunctional effects according with their molecular weight and structure. Especially the density and the location of branches may play an important role in biofunctional effects, and the branches should be at every key point. Several kinds of oligosaccharides having 2-5 units and polysaccharides were commercialized as healthy foodstuffs. Oligosaccharides having biofunctional effects against plants and microbes were also composed of around 6 units of monosaccharide. Moreover, even monosaccharides themselves having a certain structure show some biofunctional effects.

**Keywords:** [saccharide](#), [structure](#), [biofunction](#)
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